

Elements of Plot

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Identify the elements of plot
- Analyze plot in a story

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 38
- **Teaching Model**, “The Other Frog Prince,” p. 39
- **Practice Worksheets**, Levels A and B, pp. 40–41
- **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 42

Teach

- 1. Elements of Plot:** Explain that the typical plot is made up of a series of related events and centers on a conflict—a struggle or problem—of the main character.
- 2. Teaching Elements of Plot:** Pass out the **Lesson Summary**, and guide students through the **Academic Vocabulary**. Use the **Steps** in the **Lesson Summary** to teach students how to recognize the five key stages of a plot.
 - First, draw a flow chart or sequence diagram of five events on the board.
 - Next, have volunteers fill in each event with a story plot development from the examples on the **Lesson Summary**.
 - Then, have students label each event as one element of plot. (*exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, resolution and/or falling action*)
 - Finally, have students draw a new diagram of the five elements of their own design showing how the action changes from exposition through resolution. (*Diagrams may show a straight level or shallow increase line, followed by a rising line to an apex, then a descending line to an end point. Exemplary diagrams will have a shorter span on the descent and a longer span on the rise.*)
- 3. Guided Practice:** Distribute the **Teaching Model**, “Androcles,” a fable by Aesop.
 - Have students read the story. Then ask: How did you expect the story to develop toward the end? (*Sample: The Lion would eat Androcles.*) Ask: What actually happens? (*The Lion recognizes his friend and shocks the Emperor by licking Androcles like a friendly dog.*)
 - Have students read the sidenotes on the **Teaching Model**.
 - Use the Steps of the **Lesson Summary** to help students identify the five plot elements. (*Sample: The exposition introduces the main characters—Androcles and the Lion. The conflict arises when Androcles escapes to the forest and meets a Lion, who seems to be in pain. The rising action develops the conflict when Androcles decides to help the Lion, whereupon the Lion takes him home and feeds him. The climax occurs when Androcles and the Lion are captured and Androcles is sentenced to be thrown to the starving Lion. The falling action occurs when the Lion recognizes Androcles and shocks the Emperor and his court by licking his friend. The resolution is that Androcles is freed and the Lion is let loose in the forest.*)

ELEMENTS OF PLOT, CONTINUED

- Have students read the questions in **Step 6** of the **Lesson Summary** and describe the effects of the various plot elements on the meaning of the story. (*The plot of Androcles shows that compassion can overcome fear, that gratitude is a sign of a noble soul, and that a true friend will never turn on you.*)

QUICK CHECK. Ask students to name the plot elements in the well-known fairy tale “Cinderella.”

1. Cinderella gets a gown and glass slippers and goes to the ball. (*rising action*)
2. The prince tries the remaining glass slipper on Cinderella's foot and it fits. (*climax*)
3. Cinderella and her prince live happily ever after. (*resolution*)

Practice and Apply

Practice activities for plot structure appear on pp. 40–41.

- Assign **Practice Worksheet A** to students who need more structured activities.
- Assign **Practice Worksheet B** to grade-level and above-level students.

Sample Answers: Practice Worksheet A

1. **Exposition:** *the description of how the grasshopper and the ant each spends his summer*
2. **Conflict:** *the grasshopper's carefree way and the ant's careful planning for the future*
3. **Rising action:** *the grasshopper's encounters with the ant in the summer and in the winter, and the grasshopper's begging the ant for food*
4. **Climax:** *the ant's decision not to help the hungry grasshopper*
5. **Falling Action and Resolution:** *the ant's return to his den and the grasshopper's realization that the ant was right*

Sample Answers: Practice Worksheet B

1. *The exposition is the explanation that the prince wants to marry and holds a ball, where he meets a mysterious beauty.*
2. *The conflict is the young woman's abrupt departure from the ball.*
3. *The rising action is the prince's search for the woman who fits the glass slipper.*
4. *The climax is the prince's discovery of the servant girl whom the shoe fits and her refusal to marry him.*
5. *The falling action and resolution is the woman's departure and the prince's realization that she would not have suited him, followed by his marriage another woman.*
6. *The plot reveals that physical attraction is not the only requirement for a happy marriage.*

Assess and Reteach

Use these guidelines to determine if students need the **Reteaching Worksheet**.

- **Practice Worksheet A:** Students should assign the correct events and labels to all five sections of the diagram.
- **Practice Worksheet B:** Students should answer at least five of the six items correctly.

For students who need reteaching, review the **Student Lesson Summary**. Walk students through the **Here's How** steps, using the model in **Practice A**. Then have students complete the **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 42.

Answer Key: Reteaching Worksheet

1. *b* 2. *c* 3. *a* 4. *c* 5. *b*